

## Abstract

Most museums produce, over time, a photographic archive. These visual archives tend to dominate the various documents used to reconstruct past exhibitions, and increasingly supply more and more publications, especially publications on the history of the institution. But, even more than this, they play a central role as essential sources for the history of exhibitions. By putting works in perspective with each other and the venue, and by showing the specific nature of a particular display, an exhibition view photograph is the outcome of a viewpoint (the eye of the photographer) and goes well beyond any form of reproduction. Questioning it as such opens up a particularly fruitful avenue of research, restores to the photographers their fundamental contribution to the history of art, and better reveals a creeping effect involving works being rendered heritage by exhibitions, an effect accentuated by photography and its digitization. ●

## Resumo

A maioria dos museus produz, ao longo do tempo, um arquivo fotográfico. Esses arquivos visuais tendem a ser elementos cada vez mais preponderantes para a reconstituição de exposições, e estão cada vez mais presentes em publicações, especialmente publicações sobre a história das instituições. Mas, mais do que isso, eles desempenham um papel central como fontes essenciais para a história das exposições. Colocando em evidência a relação das obras entre si e com o local de exposição, e mostrando a natureza específica de uma montagem particular, uma fotografia de exposição é o resultado de um ponto de vista (o olhar do fotógrafo) e está longe de ser apenas uma forma de reprodução. Questioná-la enquanto tal abre uma via de investigação particularmente produtiva, que reconhece aos fotógrafos o seu contributo fundamental para a produção da história da arte e revela o progressivo efeito de patrimonialização das obras de arte através das exposições, efeito esse acentuado pela fotografia e pela sua digitalização. ●

## keywords

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## palavras-chave

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FOTOGRAFIA DE EXPOSIÇÃO  
MONTAGEM  
PATRIMÔNIO  
DIGITALIZAÇÃO DE ARQUIVOS

# EXHIBITION VIEW

## THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF EXHIBITION HISTORY: THE EXAMPLE OF THE *CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ* OF THE CENTRE POMPIDOU'S EXHIBITIONS

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RÉMI PARCOLLET

Independent art historian, Paris, France

Most museums produce, over time, a photographic archive. Commissioned and created in an increasingly systematic and exhaustive way, exhibition view photographs or installation shots are an essential component in drawing up catalogues or websites and feed into wider perspectives historians' analysis. These visual archives tend to dominate the various documents used to reconstruct past exhibitions, and increasingly supply more and more publications, especially publications on the history of the institution. But, even more than this, they play a central role as essential sources of the history of exhibitions. Clearly, this kind of archival photography holds a decisive position. What is the nature of these particular documents? Exhibition view photographs have existed since the invention of photography, but for a long time they have been stowed away for documentary or archival use and have not been acknowledged. They have become gradually inseparable from most contemporary forms of artistic expression.

Exhibition photography appears now to be a unique analytical instrument to question the role of exhibitions in the heritage of contemporary and modern works of art. This kind of archival photography holds an important position in the Centre Pompidou's research programme on the history of its exhibitions. It was in 2010 that the Musée National d'Art Moderne began to digitize its entire collection of exhibition views. This process of inventory is as much the cause as the consequence of production of a *catalogue raisonné* of all its past exhibitions.

To describe the specific features of these exhibition views, it is useful to present the "becoming images" phenomenon of some historical exhibitions. It is then interesting to observe how the Centre Pompidou has developed a research programme contributing to the history of art through the exhibitions it has presented over forty

years. The potential of the visual archives produced since its origin is therefore very clear. An interesting comparison can be established with the archival project carried out by the MoMA. Examples of publications constituting the first occurrences of *catalogues raisonnés* of exhibitions confirm the determining role played by these images. It is important later to observe the uses of documentary photography not only to write the history of exhibitions, but also by curatorial practices and the consequences, in terms of heritagization and digitization of these visual archives. Exhibitions are one of the vectors of contemporary art as heritage. Photographs of exhibition views are both memory and instrument. Through this photographic practice and its production, diffusion, reception and uses, it is possible to decipher the political dimension of the heritage of contemporary and modern art in the exhibition. Photographic reproductions of museum spaces, depicting the evolution of museographic practices, form a very heterogeneous corpus. As a means of gaining knowledge about exhibitions, it is important, therefore, that it be as “objective” as possible. It must have reliable neutral and descriptive qualities. These concerns can be linked to the concerns of sculpture and architecture photography, which is also determined by a necessary objectivity counterbalanced by a greater or lesser degree of interpretation by the photographer.

A photograph of an exhibition view is not a reproduction; its basic principle is to put the works in perspective with each other and to show the specific features of a display. A photographer must respond objectively to a commission, but the experience of the exhibition is often seen in space and photographing involves choices of points of view, framing, and light. Contrary to the photographic reproduction of an artwork, radically decontextualizing it, a photograph of exhibition view is determined according to time and space. The photographer documents links between artworks and place, the relationship among the artworks, the exchanges between the works and the public. This type of document comes before, during and after the exhibition, both an indicator and a verifier of information. The indications which it supplies establish elements for a critical analysis of an exhibition.

It is useful to bear in mind that the universal fame of several important exhibitions of the 20th century essentially stemmed from the photographs which had moulded their “becoming-image”. The distinction between the photographic documentation of exhibitions and the photographic reproduction of artworks became clear quite early on. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, during the Salons de Paris, Gustave Le Gray would take overall views, which depicted the ways the paintings were hung rather than the paintings themselves. The latter were actually hard to discern since the issue was, foremost, the exhibition itself: a space rather than a surface and an ambience rather than singled-out objects. In 1851, Le Gray succeeded in capturing light coming in through the glass roof, glorifying the marble of the sculptures, but the sidelong shot chiefly let one see the impressive frames of the paintings rather than the paintings themselves (Fig. 1). The following year, bigger frames and a mastering of depth of field allowed him to photograph the entire perspective of the gallery from floor to ceiling. The image was strikingly composed, balanced

Fig. 1 – One of the rooms of the Salon of 1850-1851, Paris. Photo: Gustave Le Gray.



around an accentuated line of flight. Conversely, by photographing each wall of the Grand Salon of the Palais-Royal head-on, his photographs came to be precious and precise documents for the art historian. On the other hand, shooting pictures in perspective, something he went back to in 1853, brought information mainly on display practices and the spatial organization of the artworks. Such representations of exhibition galleries are far from scarce in the history of painting and engravings. The pictorial genre has, in fact, been practiced in different eras since the 16th century. Those works can be seen as ancestors of the photographic documentation of exhibitions: they dealt with questions regarding the composition and conventions of architectural representation and, most of all, they dealt with the development of the point of view, the place and the role of the viewer-spectator. The picture of the Louvre's *Grande Galerie* in ruins, painted by Hubert Robert in 1796, exemplifies this practice of showing the display of works of art at an exhibition site, which in this case is completely fictional, forming and suggesting a theory on exhibition space. There is the idea of creating a montage, the image of a display sequence, as if the painter were a curator.

A photograph of the hall dedicated to Kazimir Malevich's "Last Futurist Exhibition 0,10" in Saint Petersburg in 1915 is certainly one of the most well-known exhibition photographs in art history books (Fig. 2). Among the thirty-six totally abstract paintings presented by Malevich, his work *Black Square* against white background stood out. Its very specific placement, hanging in the middle of the top of the corner of the room, made the "quadrangle" visually prominent in comparison to the other works. The display was above all symbolic and perhaps even spiritual, as the corner of a room is the place of the icon in the orthodox religion. Malevich's gesture could also be seen as a desire to fill the space with painting. With this photograph, the basic principle of exhibition pictures became clear: to put the works of art into perspective and to describe the preciseness of the display. As the photograph of

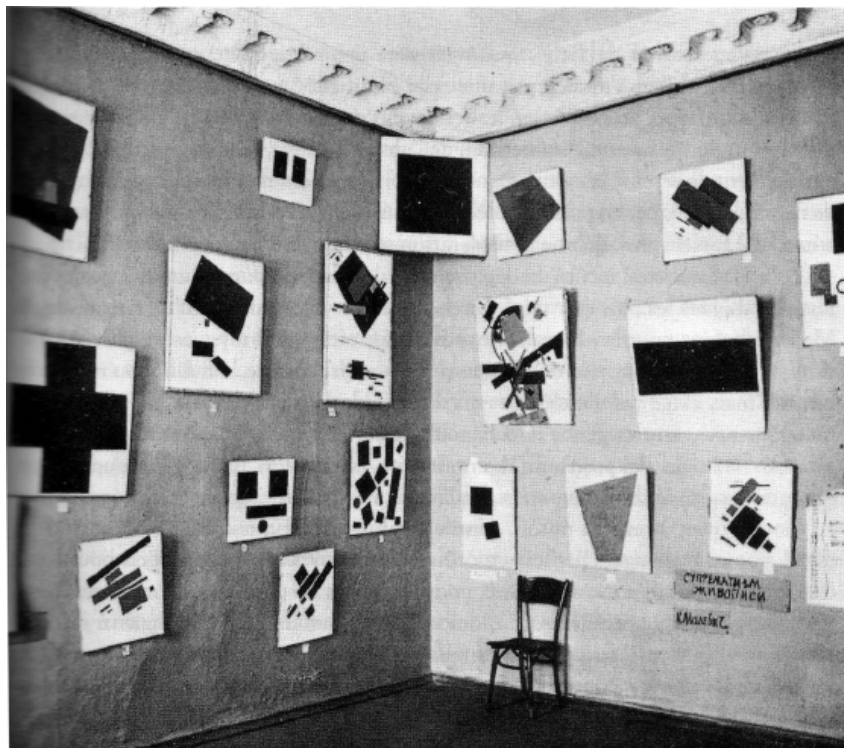


Fig. 2 – View of the Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 0,10. Petrograd (Russia), 1915.

the exhibition hall was shot from an angle, most of the works of art hung on the two walls were captured slantwise, in perspective, while the black quadrangle was placed in the centre facing the camera lens. The photograph therefore emphasized what the display itself demonstrated; it placed the acme of Malevich's pictorial research right in the centre.

This photograph mainly confirmed that the artistic avant-gardes of the beginning of the last century were quite concerned with the way their works were exhibited, that painting and sculpture could not be autonomous and that their perception depended upon the hosting site.

The first International Dada-Messe held in Berlin in 1920 highlighted the importance of the photographic documentation of exhibitions as well as its role in potentially securing an artistic event a place in history (Fig. 3). The organizers of the exhibition had hired a professional photographer, Robert Sennecke, whose photographs of the opening made the political and provocative character of the event tangible. The photographs described particularly well the main exhibition hall and the specific layout of the works of art, as well as the unconventional way they were hung. Shot in the main hall during the opening of the show, the exhibition picture was organized around one angle, much like those of the Malevich hall in the "0,10" exhibition in Petrograd.

The photographer constructed the picture by placing the corner of the room in the centre of the composition to create a perspective, which gave depth of field wherein the works of art were displayed according to a homogeneous and regu-



Fig. 3 – Erste Internationale Dada Messe [First International Dada Fair]. Berlin, 1920. Photo: Robert Sennecke.

lar distribution on the surface of the picture. In accordance with the spirit of the exhibition, that ideal point of view placed the visitors in a central position where they were surrounded by the works of art they were contemplating. Just like in the pictures of “0,10”, an empty chair, this time in the foreground, invited the viewer to take the time to see the exhibition side by side with the artist Hannah Höch whose head was turned towards the off-frame space. The density of the display filled not only the walls, but also the ceiling (a dummy was hanging over the visitors’ heads), which contributed to creating a total setting.

The Spanish Republic’s Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition in 1937 provided the framework for a monumental exhibition picture taken by Hugo Herdeg for the *Cahiers de l’art* (the image of the exhibition was thus put immediately in circulation). The chosen point of view linked Calder’s *Mercury Fountain* with Picasso’s *Guernica* (Fig. 4). The thin bars built the photographic composition by surrounding the three dimensions of the fountain and aligning themselves with the surface of the huge painting. From floor to ceiling, all the architectural elements also participated in putting the exhibition space into perspective. However, the depth of field of the photograph remains a single interpretation that needs to be completed by other points of view. Other photographers also photographed the Pavilion, such as Baranger who stands back from the exhibition and gives a more global picture of it. The photographic documentation of exhibitions affirmed its genetic connection to architectural photography.

The reinstallation of Picasso’s work at the Reina Sophia in Madrid was conditioned by Hugo Herdeg’s photo. The museum curators wanted to associate *Guernica* with a





Fig. 4 – The Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* at the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, Paris, 1937. Photo: Hugo Herdeg.

fountain (a rather smaller one, on a pedestal in a display case) by Calder. The press photographer was confronted with a need to associate the painting with the sculpture and to take up Herdeg's composition. The "becoming-image" of *Guernica*'s first display stipulated the way the work would be exhibited and even the way it would be photographed once more.

The Palais de Tokyo was inaugurated during the international exhibition of 1937 in Paris. The National Museum of Modern Art is installed there but officially opened after the war, in 1947. Thirty years later it moved to the Centre Pompidou.

The Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris has produced over a thousand exhibitions in its forty-year history, making the institution one of the world's largest producers of temporary exhibitions. The museum has, since 2011, undertaken the vast and ambitious project of producing a *catalogue raisonné* of all its exhibitions. It is no longer only a matter of documenting its collections, but also of categorizing and classifying its past exhibitions. Institutions no longer consider the work of art as autonomous object, but rather perceive the work through its different appearance in exhibitions and the relations that it develops with other works in different contexts, in the polysemy it generates through different curatorial acts that together shed light on new and possible interpretations.

The various collections of photographic archives collected at the Centre Pompidou are today dispersed and mainly preserved in three places: the archives centre, the collections department and the Kandinsky library. This archival architecture is symptomatic of a complex institutional system.

The “archives department” of the Centre Pompidou, formerly called “administrative archives”, is dependent on the Legal and Financial Department. In these different collections, there are photographs of *vernissages* and events, but in some archives, especially those of curators, one finds mainly exhibition views in the form of prints. Their presence in this type of collection highlights the conservators’ use of this particular type of document.

The second entity is the photo library, installed and developed within the collections department. It mainly preserves display views of the museum, more precisely, presentations of the permanent collection. This documentation goes back to the installation of the collections at the Palais de Tokyo. This photography archive is not made up of reproductions of the works but of shots of works in a display situation in the museum rooms. With every modification of the permanent exhibition, the internal photographers took and archived photos. The expression “museographic photography” seems appropriate in this case. Many of these photographs are digitized and disseminated on an intranet database as a tool for conservation.

In the Kandinsky Library there is former documentation of the museum, mainly preserving the exhibition views most concerned with the writing of a history of current exhibitions. Significantly, the photo library has recently been renamed the “photographic collection” of the Kandinsky Library, distinguishing it from the collection’s photo library, but certainly bringing it closer to the museum’s collection of photographs. The mission of this library, installed since the renovation in 2000 on the 3rd floor of the Centre Pompidou, is to build and maintain a documentary collection reflecting the art and architecture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We can distinguish between three sets of photographic collections kept: those that enter as acquisitions, then donations and deposits, and finally those that are commissioned or produced by the institution, often in the form of reportage. Since the beginning, the Centre Pompidou has produced archives itself. The production of photographs to cover all the Centre’s exhibitions (including the scenography, works in the exhibition setting, openings, events...) is considered a strong point of the collection. The photographic campaigns of external exhibitions since 1972 were governed by a desire for completeness that is no longer possible today. The most important set consists of reports made by the Centre’s photographers at exhibitions since opening in 1977. Approximately 100,000 documents or 23 linear metres of archives. This internal production also concerns the history of the building before and during the works and the reopening in 2000, with reports consisting of architectural photographs.

In general, beyond the archives of the Centre Pompidou, photographs of exhibitions are not as neutral as they may seem. Photographers often take into account the exhibition locations they photograph. Their shots respond to their own eyes. This



raises the question of the objectivity necessary for their documentary status. A careful study of the working methods and personal approaches of the photographers, as well as the cultural context and technical constraints surrounding them, proves to be indispensable and fruitful. From this point of view, the use of photographers by the Centre Pompidou for its “own production” of photographic archives of exhibition photographs is an original feature. Few museum institutions have worked regularly with a team of internal photographers. The MNAM-CCI is one of the institutions that has given themselves the means to build their own documentation. In 1977, the year the museum opened, Béatrice Hatala documented the first presentation of the permanent collections of the MNAM installed at the Centre Pompidou. It then developed into an open course requiring an extended, almost “panoramic” view to include a large number of works — sculptures and paintings — in the same image. The works are juxtaposed, but none overlaps.

At the same time, Jacques Faujour photographed the installation created by Jean Tinguely for the forum of the Centre, the *Crocodrome* (Fig. 5). The black-and-white report illustrates the renewal of the report work/public initiated by the Paris institution. Visitors stroll through the baroque and chaotic installation that unfolds in the open space of an avant-garde exhibition area, the work is then perceived as a machine in a factory (the *ultra-turbulences* building was alternately qualified as an oil rig or refinery). Faujour’s mission was not to reproduce the collections, but to photograph the exhibitions and again to produce useful reports for designing them. For the *Paris-Moscou* exhibition in 1979, he travelled to Russia with Jean-Claude Planchet: the first phase of the work consisted of going on site to produce documentation that would serve the conservators. Then Faujour photographed the exhibition itself. The structure of the building, with its large plateaux free from posts, creates ambitious scenes. Faujour’s colour views testify to the complexity of

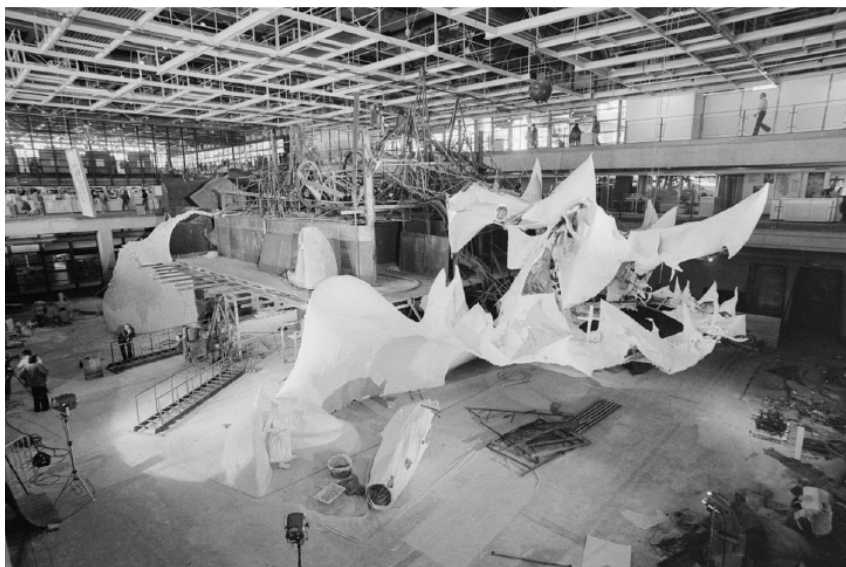


Fig. 5 – *Le crocodrome de Zig et Puce*. Centre George Pompidou, Paris, 1977. Photo: Jacques Faujour.

<sup>1</sup> Staniszewski, Mary Anne. 1998. *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*. Cambridge, MIT Press.

the display, where the reconstruction of the tower of Vladimir Tatlin, presented as a monumental sculpture in the context of the exhibition *Paris-Moscou*, is surrounded by a system of chair rails and showcases which evoke the systems of monstration imagined by the Russian and Soviet artists of the 1910s and 1920s. The density of works presented in permeable spaces offered the photographer framing solutions to achieve carefully composed images. Faujour is a humanist photographer influenced by Cartier Bresson and Robert Doisneau.

It is therefore a characteristic of the Centre Pompidou to have organized, produced and inventoried its own documentation more to create an archive than for communication. The photographic views of exhibitions held at the Centre Pompidou constitute an original and essential element of the documents that enable the analytical work essential to studying the history of exhibitions. Work on these archives is today an opportunity to gather and match materials to better measure the contribution of these different photographers to the memory, documentation and evolution of curatorial practices (see Parcollet 2015).

Like the Centre Pompidou, the MoMA has also worked regularly with the same photographers. In 2004, to mark its 75th anniversary and put a spotlight on the archives and photographs documenting its exhibitions, the MoMA published an atypical book tracing the history of the museum from the inaugural exhibition in 1929 (see Bee and Elligott 2004). Collaboration with a private company, ARTstor, allowed about 16,700 photographs to be digitized. The digitization of these archival photographs had previously been used in a book by Mary Anne Staniszewski,<sup>1</sup> the subject of which was a history of exhibition displays at the MoMA. Her reflection on the setting of exhibition space was therefore essentially based on a collection of documentary photographs. Inventory work, supported by the museum with the assistance of a private partnership, has allowed independent researchers to carry out specific studies on the activities and practices of a museum institution. In 2014, the MoMA expanded the project, with the ambition of fully describing, preserving, and opening MoMA's curatorial and exhibition record files to a broad audience. In 2016, records for exhibitions from 1929 through 1989 became available; the project features over 3,500 exhibitions, illustrated by primary documents such as exhibition view photographs.

This desire to catalogue exhibitions can also be found, in a very different way, in the imposing book on Harald Szeemann, *Harald Szeemann with through because towards despite. Catalogue of all Exhibitions 1957-2005* (2007), edited by two of Szeemann's former colleagues, Tobia Bezzola and Roman Kurzmeier. The subtitle *Catalogue of all exhibitions 1957-2005* demonstrates a desire for completeness specific to the principle of a *catalogue raisonné*. This exceptional volume contains 962 illustrations, mainly exhibition views, drawn from the archives that the curator had created and added to throughout his career and which served as a real working tool. Bezzola and Kurzmeier scoured the archives to select this set of exhibition views, the backbone of the project. As with *Art In Our Time*, and MoMA.org, photographs

are presented with other types of documents: press cuttings, correspondence, and also annotated plans.

In the middle of the 20th century, art called for a new photographic protocol, the product of the emergence of space experiments, the autonomy of artworks and their relationship with the environment. During that period, numerous exhibitions owed their fame to their photogenic appeal and revealed the curators' determining role. In 1969, Harry Shunk did a story on Harald Szeemann's exhibition "Live in your head: when attitudes become form".<sup>2</sup> Balthazar Burkhardt, who was the Bern Kunsthalle's official photographer, counter-balanced his point of view: through the two viewpoints, it became possible to reconstitute a processual exhibition by calling its very perception into question. Not long after this exhibition, Szeemann invented the craft of the independent curator by purchasing all the photographs of his curatorial choices for the Swiss institution that Burkhardt had shot. The dialogue between the curator and the photographer was then underway and their interaction would assert itself and signify a common gesture: to bring to light and to bring into view. The curator and the photographer were no longer tied to an institution; their co-dependency really made them authors. The "becoming-image" of the exhibition has resulted in the latter becoming increasingly organized according to the photographic image the photographer should be able to achieve in order to represent it. The curator and the display designer think about the relations among the artworks as well as the context, the site of the display and the points of view available to visitors in advance, according to their photogenic potential. Practice and gradual recognition of the photographic documentation of exhibitions have not only been accompanied by profound evolutions in creative practices towards contemporary art, at times the photographic documentation of exhibitions was actually what made evolutions possible.

These days, exhibition views seem to be an obligatory way of dealing with the relationship between art and photography. More than praxis, it is nothing less than a photographic paradigm. Artists and curators, who are increasingly involved in the way their work is received and visualized, use this documentation as a tool not only for thinking about spatial arrangement, but also for re-thinking the history of the art on display. Access to this rich material connected to the science of archiving is part and parcel of a growing interest in the history of exhibitions, to which it is no stranger.

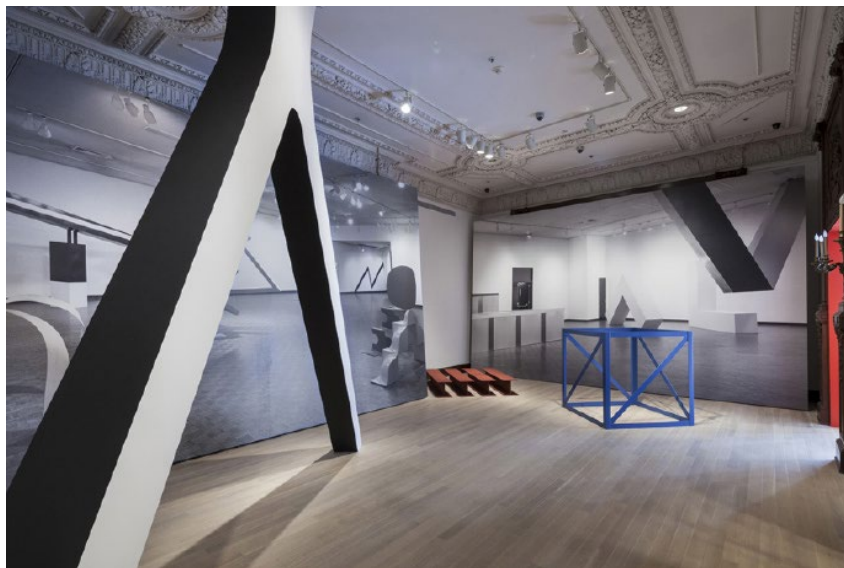
In 2014, Jens Hoffmann, deputy director of the Jewish Museum in New York, organized a two-part exhibition (*Others 1* and *2*)<sup>3</sup> to revisit another: *Primary Structures*,<sup>4</sup> a decisive moment in the history of art, presented at the same institution nearly 50 years earlier (Fig. 6). Taken from the Jewish Museum archives, enlarged views of the original show covered most of the museum's walls; so the place as history was endlessly duplicated, like a *mise en abyme*. There was a new encounter between the 1:1 representation of the 1966 exhibition in black and white and the new arrangement consisting of other works produced in the same period by different artists. The New York critics were very swift to interpret Jens Hoffmann's curatorial proposal

<sup>2</sup> *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (Works — Concepts — Processes — Situations — Information). Curated by Harald Szeemann. Kunsthalle Bern. 22 March-27 April 1969.

<sup>3</sup> *Others 1*: 14 March-18 May 2014 ; *Others 2*: 25 May-3 August 2014. Curated by Jens Hoffmann. Jewish Museum, New York.

<sup>4</sup> *Primary Structures*. Curated by Kynaston McShine. Jewish Museum, New York, 27 April-12 June 1966.

Fig. 6 – View of the exhibition Others 1. Other Primary Structures. Jewish Museum, New York, 2014. Photo: David Heald.



as “a very hands-on form of study: exhibitions that are themselves re-creations of –or responses to – past exhibitions”. The use of the exhibition’s visual archives lay at the root of the scientific project. It underwrote the study and analysis of it, with Jens Hoffmann defining his project as an invitation to think about the history of art, these photographs represent the “canons” of art history as well as “a documentation of the experience of the exhibition”.<sup>5</sup>

Germano Celant also used these visual archives for his reconstruction of the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* at the Prada Foundation in Venice in 2013. The OMA architectural agency was associated with the project for this “remake” at a palace the Venetian exhibition originally designed for a Kunsthalle. Photographs taken by Balthasar Burkhard, the Shunk / Kender duo, Claudio Abate, Dölf Preisig, Sigfried Kuhn and Albert Winkler were used to recreate the works, the architecture of the place and the original exhibition plan. The exceptional richness of the visual archives of the exhibition, and later the 2011 acquisition and digitization of the exhibition views in Harald Szeemann’s archives by the Getty Research Institute of Los Angeles, very clearly explain the tendency of these different reconstruction operations. The way that exhibitions became images favoured Szeemann’s celebrity and, as a result, his role and place in the history of art. The archives of exhibition curators are often made up of photographs, not only reproductions of works which they have exhibited or wanted to exhibit, but also views of those works in different exhibition situations. The case of Harald Szeemann’s archives is especially interesting. Exhibition views are useful both for illustrating the work of the exhibition designer and for devising upcoming displays. Jens Hoffmann is quite clear about this aspect: “About the curator archives, the installation photography for me is the most important part of the archives. I think that the emergence of the independent curator like Szeemann necessitated a different type of documentation”.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Remi Parcollet. 2016. “(Re)produire l’exposition, (re)penser l’histoire de l’art. Autour des archives visuelles de *Primary Structures*”. *Critique d’art* 46 [online]. Paris, Printemps/Été 2016. Accessed April 2019, <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/21190>; DOI: 10.4000/critiquedart.21190.

<sup>6</sup> Jens Hoffmann, interviewed by Rémi Parcollet on 22 October 2015 at the Jewish Museum, not published.

By putting works in perspective with each other and the venue, and by showing the specific nature of a particular display, an exhibition view photograph is the outcome of a viewpoint (the eye of the photographer) and goes well beyond any form of reproduction. Questioning it as such opens up a particularly fruitful avenue of research, restores to the photographers their fundamental contribution to the history of art, and better reveals a creeping effect involving works being rendered heritage by exhibitions, an effect accentuated by photography and its digitization. For some years now, we have been witnessing various digitization experiments of archives documenting exhibitions and their history by museum institutions and also by art centres. These are hardly coordinated, and yet their operating methods will very often condition the valorisation, knowledge, diffusion and scientific or communication use of these collections of documents. In addition, the use of photography to document exhibits raises many legal issues, particularly in terms of copyright. No status is clearly defined and the questions are formulated simply: does exhibition view photography generate copyright? For whom, the artist, the photographer, the museum, the commissioner? In general, institutions are divided between a need to control the use of photographs protected by property rights and a mission of broad and democratic dissemination of the collective heritage that they preserve.

The database could emerge as a comparable and contemporary form of the cataloguing principle whose development and uses evolve according to the possibilities offered by the digital world: crossings, dynamic interface, search engines, semantic web... It is certain that digital technology has changed cataloguing techniques. The issues related to the dissemination of sources on the Internet, the legal questions, are numerous. The digitization and construction of an interface often make it possible to rethink the organization of a collection or the connections between different collections. The importance of archiving and documentation exhibitions is growing. For this reason, it seems important to compare the collections kept in the archives of the Centre Pompidou with other collections of archives. The “act of exhibiting” is now an obvious object of study, regularly questioned and constantly evolving. The relationship between photography and the history of art is often discussed (Heinrich Wölfflin, Erwin Panofsky, Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin, Andre Malraux ...). Exhibition views are the basis of the history of the exhibitions because they include the specific feature of combining space and time. In the postmodern context, the current recurrence of exhibition reconstructions from these visual archives bears witness to this. But exhibition designers do not take into account the subjectivity of how the photographers of these images see things and once their environment and their conditions of production and reception are traced and examined, they become insidiously critical points of view. Exhibition view photographs can no longer be considered transparent means. In the context of the ephemeral and of the processual, these photographs, often substitutes for memories, are today tools for writing the history of art but also, and especially, the major vectors of creating a living and subjective artistic heritage. ●



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